



Alexandra Di Cicco & Sebastian Mancera

Goodwill MicroEnterprise Success Story

ACHIEVING IS BELIEVING!

Alexandra Di Cicco and Sebastian Mancera knew that starting their own business would be a monumental task. Thanks to small business training from Goodwill and a lot of hard work, the duo is now the power behind Juicelation, a cold pressed organic juice business.

Sebastian and Alexandra's early business efforts were a struggle. The two were dedicated and even gave up their jobs to focus slowly on the business. They started off selling juice at flea markets but were barely breaking even.

After being referred by a friend, Alexandra and Sebastian enrolled in Goodwill's MicroEnterprise program, a six-week small business training course that provides aspiring entrepreneurs with the training they need to write a business plan and start their own business.

"They were all in from the beginning," says Dorothy Browning, Community Education Manager at Goodwill. "They were really dedicated and committed."

While in the class, the couple engaged in some friendly competition.

"At every class, participants are asked to get up and give their elevator speech, and Sebastian was always really good at it," says Dorothy. "At the final class, I guess Alexandra was feeling extra competitive, and she stood up and completely nailed it. When it was Sebastian's turn he was totally thrown by how perfect hers was- it was great to see them play off one another and truly enjoy learning about their business together."

Alexandra and Sebastian completed the Cape Coral class in September 2014 and started renting a commercial kitchen in Bonita Springs, selling their juice at farmers markets.

The couple realized, during the course, that their initial price was too low, and that the model they were using was not sustainable. They revisited their price structure and found the recipe for success.

Now, less than a year a half later, the couple has acquired their own shop in Naples, where they have gone on to hire other employees. At a time when organic foods and healthy living are trendy, Juicelation seems to have found its niche.

"They are in the right market, at the right time," says Dorothy. "The Naples area is the perfect setting for their business for both economic and lifestyle reasons. I think their future in business looks bright."



What is a Microenterprise?

Microenterprises are the backbone of our economy. A microenterprise is any type of small business that has fewer than five employees and requires \$35,000 or less to start-up, generally much less.

- *Microenterprises represent 87% of all businesses in the United States.*
- *There are more than 24 million microenterprises in our country.*
- *One out of every six private sector employees in our country works for a microenterprise.*

To date, the Goodwill SWFL MicroEnterprise Institute has helped to start or sustain 161 small businesses in Southwest Florida.